

Remarks

The Examiner has requested that claim 14 be deleted because the recently amended claim 13 incorporates the limitation of dependent claim 14. Applicants agree and have deleted claim 14.

In the Advisory Action, the Examiner has also stated that the pending claims are unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,103,152 (hereafter referred to as the "'152 patent"). Applicants respectfully disagree with this conclusion, and reiterate that the '152 patent does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

The Examiner has stated that the teachings of the '152 patent include melt blending of a polyphenylene ether resin and a styrene-diene block copolymer to form an adhesive composition having improved high temperature performance characteristics. However, the '152 patent also requires electron beam crosslinking of the foam in order to achieve high cohesive strength and/or high modulus. *See, e.g.,* '152 patent, column 2, lines 5-7. Indeed, the '152 patent teaches only implementations wherein the article produced is crosslinked using an electron beam processing unit. *See, e.g.,* column 14, lines 36 to 40.

In contrast, the pending application claims a foamed pressure sensitive adhesive article that is produced without the need to be crosslinked, in particular a foamed pressure sensitive adhesive article that contains a mixture of styrenic block copolymer along with polyarylene oxide polymer, yet which does not require crosslinking to have high temperature performance. As discussed throughout the specification of the present application, the combination of a polymeric mixture containing at least one styrenic block copolymer and at least one polyarylene oxide polymer, along with one or more expandable polymeric microspheres, results in a

significant crosslinking. The inclusion of the requirement that the composition have less than 25 percent gel content incorporates the characteristic that the material has relatively little crosslinking, or even no crosslinking.

In addition, the '152 patent does not teach a pressure sensitive adhesive containing a polyarylene oxide polymer. Although the '152 patent discloses foams containing polyphenylene oxide alloys, Applicants believe such alloys to be distinct from the polyarylene oxide polymers as currently claimed, which are not alloys. Even if these two materials are deemed to be equivalent, the polyarylene oxide alloys disclosed in the '152 patent are taught in terms of acrylate-insoluble polymers, which are typically not adhesive as required by the current claim invention. *See* '152 patent, column 7, lines 13 to 33.

Even if the ingredients of the foams in the '152 patent and the present application are the same, there is no teaching in the '152 patent that would permit one of skill in the art to practice the entire claimed invention of the present application. Applicants again specifically call the Examiner's attention to the fact that the process temperatures disclosed in the '152 patent would not suffice to produce the foamed pressure sensitive adhesive containing polyarylene oxide polymers, which have a glass transition temperature typically in excess of 175° C. This fact is demonstrated, for example, at column 14, lines 36 to 40, which teach extruder temperatures of 93.3° C -- too low to melt process typical polyarylene oxide polymers. In contrast, the present application teaches screw temperatures significantly higher than those taught in the '152 patent. *See* page 22, line 4.

On the basis of the foregoing, Applicants believe the claims are in a condition for allowance. Applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to contact him with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

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